

The Sunday School Service.

BY DAVID BAILEY.

Sept. 14th 1884.

Waiting for the Lord.—Psalms 40:1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I delight to do thy will, O my God."—Ps. 40:8.

[Open the Bible and read the lesson.]

INTRODUCTION.

In this lesson we have another psalm of David, but we do not know when nor under what circumstances it was written. It is one of those psalms in which David, while voicing his own experiences, also prophetically points out the Messiah so far as David was a type of Christ. As to the time of writing, it is immaterial, since there is nothing historical in the composition, and the lesson is in the operations of the heart and not in anything connected with the outer world.

One would not think, after reading these penitential psalms, that the author was so weak in resisting temptation, but we should learn from David's life and history that "the man after God's own heart" was not sinless, but was ever ready to acknowledge his sin when it was pointed out to him. Penitence rather than perfection is the standard by which to judge humanity.

LESSON.

Verse 1. *I waited patiently.* This may mean not only that he waited without being restive, but that he waited in suffering, in distress. *He inclined unto me.* Leaned forward to hearken to the cry. Took a listening attitude.

Verse 2. *He brought me up.* The Psalmist represents himself as having fallen into a pit from which he could not escape. *Out of the miry clay.* Such as would be very likely to be found at the bottom of a deep pit. *Set my feet upon a rock.* Placed him on a solid foundation. Notice the contrast: out of the miry clay of the pit to a solid rock in the pure air.

Verse 3. *A new song.* His song before had, no doubt, been one of complaint and lamentation, now it is a song of praise to our God.

Many shall see it. See the change. *And fear.* Be amazed and wonder. *Shall trust in the Lord.* The power of the Lord as shown in this act will inspire their trust and cause them to change their manner of life.

Verse 4. *Blessed.* Happy. Notice the change from description to benediction. *Respecteth not the proud.* Respecting in the sense of honoring them and endeavoring to be like them, thinking to find happiness in that way. *Turn aside to lies.* Permit themselves to be deceived. Christians should have faith enough to keep on in the Lord's way, paying no heed to those who would deceive them.

Verse 5. *Many.* Any thoughtful person can bear testimony to the truth of this statement. *More than can be numbered.* The most discriminating person would fail in attempting to enumerate the wonderful works and thoughtful providences of the Lord.

Verse 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.* A lesson that Christians should bear in mind; sacrifice is the type of prayer and as God did not desire sacrifice, so he does not care for words of prayer, but a prayerful heart he will never overlook. *Mine ears hast thou opened.* This truth was beyond the comprehension of the unaided human mind of that age. *Hast thou not required.* He required worship, heart-service, and according to the custom of the times he permitted the outward symbols but he "took no pleasure in them."

Verse 7. *Lo, I come.* To serve the Lord truly and willingly. *In the volume of the book.* In the roll of the book. Books at that time were written on long strips of paper and rolled up in a neat roll.

Verse 8. *Thy law is within my heart.* There was no formality, his heart was full of praise.

Verse 9. *In the great congregation.* In the gathering for religious purposes. *Have not refrained my lips.* Have not held my peace either on account of fear or from policy.

Verse 10. *Righteousness.* Correct judgments and righteous deeds. *Thy faithfulness.* David bore witness that God had fulfilled all promises made by him. *Loving kindness.*

* *truth.* The psalmist had proclaimed all these attributes of the Deity to the people.

Verse 11. After enumerating what he had done for the Lord, he turns to him in prayer. *Tender mercies.* David felt that he was lost indeed if the Lord gave him only justice.

Verse 12. *Innumerable evils.* The psalmist now speaks of the terrible condition in which he would be if he should depend upon himself. *My heart faileth me.* On account of his many sins and weaknesses he loses courage and is cast down.

Verse 14. *After my soul.* Life, the subtle essence that binds together the body and spirit. *Them * * that wish me evil.* The best prayer that we can offer for the wicked is that they may be defeated, overpowered and converted. If a man is successful in his evil designs it will be very difficult to persuade him to change.

Verse 15. *Aha.* Many men are ever ready to jeer at the misfortunes of others; they are "Job's comforters."

Verse 16. *The Lord be magnified.* Literally, made great; that is, let them acknowledge his greatness.

Verse 17. *I am poor, and needy.* He was a rich and powerful king, but as compared with God, he was poor needy and helpless. *The Lord, thinketh upon me.* Though he was poor and needy God would not overlook him. He had been so favored that he felt called upon to acknowledge it.

Coming to the Front.

I saw in the last issue of current volume, an inquiry as to the whereabouts of brethren Bashor, Worst, Swihart and others; to whom the others may refer I am unable to say. As for myself, I am at this writing in Akron, Indiana, having accepted an invitation to address a Union Sabbath school basket meeting which was held some two miles west of this place, on last Saturday. I presume there were two thousand people in attendance. The best of order prevailed during the session, plenty of good music, both vocal and instrumental, gladdened the hearts of the people. It was quite inspiring to hear the little folks sing the sweet songs of Zion, and everybody seemed to be interested in the good cause.

The cause of Christ seems to be gaining ground in the churches under my charge. Three were added to the church recently at Bunker Hill; two were baptized at Indian Creek, at our last visit to them. One united with the Brethren at Roann, at one of their prayer meetings, and good interest is felt in other places. Let the ministerial force respond to the cry that is coming up from every quarter.

To those that are enquiring as to whether the Brethren have left off the ordinances, we would say not one of God's ordinances have been put aside, but we have long since laid aside the traditions of the elders and the commandments of men. Yours in the hope of eternal life.

WM. W. SUMMERS.

From Louisville, Ohio.

This beautiful Sabbath morning I shall attempt to write for the EVANGELIST, that is so welcome at our home. It is so full of good news that although we have no house in which to hold public meetings, yet the EVANGELIST preaches to us every week; but if the work on our new meeting house goes on as fast the next month as it has in the past we will soon have a house to worship in with none to molest or make us afraid. The Brethren here are all alive and working in the Master's cause, our prayer meetings are interesting. We met last Wednesday evening at brother Jonas Keim's, had a good meeting. Brother Lewis Hang led the meeting. One young sister raised her voice in prayer for the first time, and we were made to rejoice to hear the brethren and sisters sing and pray and speak a word for Jesus. This afternoon brother Josiah Keim will preach for us in the River Brethren's church. They have kindly opened for us. Why does brother Stephen Hildebrand not write for the paper?

H. H. SNYDER.

The Door Opened.

I see the readers of the EVANGELIST are calling for brother Swihart. He is here at Edna Mills, and vicinity, right in the hot bed of conservatism, laboring day and night. Already some thirty-five or thirty-six came out on the Lord's side, most of whom were baptized, some few have come over from the German Baptists. There are many about ready to come out and acknowledge the Savior. We are sorry that brother Swihart has to leave us now in the midst of a great and good work.

S. BOSARD.

Transitville, Ind., Aug. 30.

Announcements.

Please announce that the Brethren of Dry Creek, in Defiance county, Ohio, will hold their communion in the United Brethren church at Sherwood, on the 4th day of October next. Morning services at the hour of four o'clock, P. M. Said point is on the B. & O. R. R., ten miles west from Defiance. Those that come over said line of road can make this point by day in time for opening services. We welcome all.

Sherwood, Ohio.

J. C. Cripe Responds.

Dear Editors; Please insert the following: TO THE BRETHREN OF THE SOUTHWEST.

I contemplate traveling westward through Illinois, Missouri and Kansas, and possibly Nebraska, sometime in October. Those desiring my services will address me at Dowagiac, Cass county, Mich. J. C. CRIFE. August 28, 1884.

A Case of Baptism Tested.

Having tried to preach near Transitville, in Tippecanoe county, Ind., several days, arrangements were made to close on Friday evening, baptize on Saturday morning near the Fairview German Baptist church, then attend their harvest meeting at the said church that day. At their harvest meeting J. B. Metzger was to meet me, and convey me to Edna Mills to begin a meeting on Saturday evening. We got belated at our starting point on said morning, and did not therefore get to the water until an hour late. Quite a congregation had convened at the water, among which was Elder Billheimer of the German Baptist church, but as we were so late, he and some others left just before we arrived, and went to the church to the meeting. After we had buried six in baptism, and prayed and layed hands on them, and were in the act of receiving them into fellowship, another one came forward and desired to be baptized. The changing of clothes and getting ready, and the necessary services all took time, and so we arrived at the church just too late for the forenoon services; got there just as the services closed. A bountiful dinner was served on the tables in the basement, to which we were kindly invited by some of the German Baptist brethren. When we were all quietly seated brother Billheimer said, "Brother Swihart, ask a blessing." Of course I responded, and felt that I did right. Ate dinner, then went back into the church and sat down. Presently, in steps an old gentleman and sat down by me and said, "a fellow can find out a good deal if he watches the corners a little." "What's the matter now," said I. "Some want you to preach; I heard them talk and I slipped up and listened, one said, 'I'd like to hear him.' Another said, 'Well I wouldn't. Just look at his clothes.'" Then said the old man to me, "Now, if they ask you, don't you refuse. Go right at it." Pretty soon brother J. B. Metzger, who was to convey me to Edna Mills, to my appointment, stepped in, and after we had passed a few words he said, "you baptized some to-day, did you?" "Yes, how did you find it out?" "I met some going home from here, as I was coming up, and they told me. I guess you scared them off." "How did I scare them off?" said I. "They are afraid that you are going to preach. When I met them I asked them if there was no meeting this afternoon? they said 'Yes.' Well, said I why didn't you stay? 'Well,' said they, 'from all indications Swihart is to run the thing this afternoon, and we thought we'd go home.' 'Well,' said I, 'couldn't you stay and hear him?' 'We could,' said they, 'but we won't. Although Swihart is not to blame, Billheimer is the man that's to blame, last Sunday instead of coming down to Edna to church, as he should have done he went out there to the Grove and helped S. with his meeting, and this morning instead of coming to the Church where his place was, he stopped down there at the creek where S. was baptizing and didn't get to the church until nearly an hour after the appointed time. We don't care how many S. baptizes, but Billheimer has no business there.' Then said I, 'Well, we have all been baptized alike and believe about the same thing, and why can't we all worship together?' 'Well,' said one of them, 'some of you were not legally baptized, because your administrators are not legally authorized to baptize, hence the baptism is not valid.' Then said I, 'I guess our baptism is about as valid as any body's baptism; our administrators were not expelled for any crime, or disobedience to the Gospel, and they have as much right to baptize as anybody.' 'Well,' said he, 'supposing a saloon keeper would baptize would you consider the baptism valid?' 'Saloon keepers don't baptize, its not their business.' 'Well, suppose then, some other wicked person would baptize, would you consider the baptism valid?' 'Well,' said I, 'I never doubted the validity of my own baptism, and your father baptized me.'"

Here the conversation stopped. The case was tested. They went their way, and J. B. came after me. The administrator alluded to by brother Metzger was accused soon after he had baptized brother J. B. of being guilty of the crime of fornication, but it was not proven on him. But a few years later, and soon, too, after he had baptized a few others, a charge of the same kind was sustained, and the man was expelled, yet the baptism that he had administered was not called in question. It was right to expel this old sinner, but if the validity of baptism depends so largely on the administrator, why did not the German Baptists expel Metzger and others who were baptized by this man while he was guilty of this abominable thing? and why do they not expel others who were baptized by wicked men of this type of whom there have been many.

J. H. SWIHART.

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The Marble Block.

Once in a house at which I was staying there lived a little lame girl. Her name was Annie. Often did I pity her when I saw her sitting at the window looking at the other children on the playground. Sometimes she was sick, too, and could not even be at the window. At last spring came and the little girl seemed better. "Now," thought I, "would it not be well to try to comfort this child in some way?" So I brought a few oranges and candies and read her a pretty book. But still the clouds did not leave her brow. "Why are you sad, Annie?" I said one day.

"Oh, sir," she replied, "I can't see why God should afflict me so, and yet give the other children so much happiness. If I could only know that God is not angry with me I would not care so much."

That day was a very pleasant one; so I asked the little girl to walk to a sculptor's room near by. Here were a great many blocks of marble. Marble you know is a very hard stone, often white. A sculptor is one who carves beautiful images out of it. So Annie and I watched him with great interest. At last I pointed to a piece of marble, rather dark and rough.

"Do you like the looks of that?" I said to her.

"Oh, no!" replied the child. "Why did they bring such an ugly block here?"

"That piece," said the gentleman, "I take in hand to-morrow."

So the next day Annie and I came to see him again. He spent most of the day in cutting off the rough places. Day by day we watched him, and day by day the block became more attractive. His sharp chisel cut in here, there, and everywhere. We both thought—

"If that stone were only alive how it would suffer."

At last one day we visited him upon his invitation.

"I have something to show Annie," said he.

So speaking, the sculptor drew aside a thin, white veil, and behold a lovely image of an angel had been made out of the rough stone. Annie almost cried with joy when she saw it.

"Now, my child," said I, "did the sculptor hate the poor ugly piece of marble which we one day saw?"

"Oh, no," she said, "he loved it."

"So," said I, "my little girl, does God love us when he cuts us with sharp trouble and sickness. He is fitting us for glory. Let us trust him. All will be well."

"Now," said Annie, "I see that God does not hate me, but that he has some good purpose in view."

Prayer and Breakfast.

Some years ago when the country around Cincinnati was newer than it now is, a pious farmer was very busy clearing his land. He had a number of hands employed, and was anxious to accomplish a large amount of work while the weather was favorable. He called them early, and went out with them before breakfast was ready. A horn was blown, and they came in and returned again to their work.

The farmer had been accustomed to have prayers every morning in his family. But to keep so many men from chopping and logging while he read and prayed was more than he could afford; so Satan suggested and the good man yielded. His pious wife saw with grief that the altar was neglected; that her husband in haste to get rich, was departing from God. She talked with him; she pleaded with him, but in vain. At last she determined to try another experiment.

The next morning the farmer and his men went out, as usual, to their work. The sun began to climb up the sky, but no breakfast horn was heard. They grew hungry, and looked anxiously toward the house; they listened, but still the expected summons did not come. After waiting an hour or two beyond the usual time, they went into the house. No table was set, no coffee was boiling on the fire, no good cook over or before it. The good wife was knitting quietly, with the Bible on her lap.

"What does this mean?" cried the husband; "why isn't our breakfast ready?"

"I thought you were in such a hurry about your work that you would not have time to eat it."

"Have time to eat it? Do you think we can live without eating?"

"You can live without eating as well as without praying. The spirit needs the bread of heaven as much as the body needs the bread of earth."

"Well, well," said the farmer, "get us the breakfast and we will have prayers every morning, no matter how busy we are, or how many workmen I have."

She got the breakfast and he kept his word. The lesson was a good one and was never forgotten.